

VZCZCXYZ0022
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #0612/01 0882011
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 292011Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7692
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000612

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; IRAN; ARGENTINE-VENEZUELAN TIES; 03/29/07;
BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Leading international stories today focus on the escalation of the conflict between the UK and Iran over the British detained military; and President Kirchner's upcoming trip to Venezuela in the aftermath of the USG complaint over President Chavez's anti-Bush rally in Buenos Aires.

2. OPINION PIECES

- "A dangerous escalation with an unpredictable end"

Maria Laura Avignolo, London-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," writes (03/29) "The propaganda war between the UK and Iran over the 15 British military who were detained in waters in dispute between Iran and Iraq is escalating in a dangerous way and it could end up with a British military operation of an unpredictable outcome.

"... A diplomatic way out of the confrontation could only be obtained through the cooperation of a third country, in the framework of a nuclear crisis between Iran and the US-UK, the rest of the EU being an uneasy witness of the whole situation. Turkey could be the country chosen by Iran to cooperate.

"... UK sources acknowledged that 'we are running out of diplomatic time' in the event Royal Marines are not 'immediately' released...

"... Governmental sources admit that there are two 'groups of planners who are analyzing two different solutions to the problem.'

"One possibility would be launching a risky rescue operation of the detained Royal Marines in an unknown site in Iran...

"The other possibility is a military operation that could start with a massive bombing of Iran. The US is reported to support this possibility although, if this were to be the case, the Bush administration would prefer the UK Government to make public breaking news while the USG expresses its 'huge concern' in public."

- "The verge of the abyss"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," comments (03/29) "Things are again on the verge of the abyss. Today, information goes back and forth about whether war could break out with Iran...

"Currently, pressure against the US and its colossal international disrepute over the adventure in Baghdad is a counterweight to a new possible attempt of war. This pressure is so huge that it could likely prevent war, although you never know when you are on the

verge of an abyss. In practice, a new war could spread the (Persian) Gulf 'swamp' with an outcome that the Iraqi mirror could possibly reflect."

- "Kirchner gets ready for another trip to Venezuela to see Chavez"

Mariano Obarrio, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nacisn," penned (03/29) "When the Argentine diplomatic spat with the US over (Chavez's) anti-Bush rally is still in the air, President Nestor Kirchner is preparing another trip to Venezuela for April 16-17 to meet again with his Bolivarian counterpart, Hugo Chavez, among others, and attend the Latin American Energy Forum, which will take place on the Margarita Island.

"The president's trip is one more gesture of friendship towards Venezuela and tension with the US.

"It will occur after the recent spat with the Bush administration, which made public a formal complaint over Chavez's anti-Bush rally in Ferro...

"... According to an official source, 'the activity in Venezuela will follow up the alliance between Enarsa and Pdvsa, which started with the inauguration of common wells in the Orinoco Strip.

"... The Argentine Foreign Ministry considered the US complaint 'unacceptable,' and it pointed out that the Government had not taken part in the organization of the Ferro rally. The main ministers, such as Cabinet Chief Alberto Fernandez and Interior Minister Anibal Fernandez, considered that Burns had 'interfered' in domestic affairs.

"However, 'La Nacisn' obtained information that Kirchner and Chavez had organized the rally during the President's latest trip to Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela, on February 28, and that they had planned it as a

sign of condemnation of Bush, who, according to them, would visit Brazil and Uruguay in those days with the purpose of dividing Mercosur.

"... Planning Minister Julio De Vido was the only minister in the Cabinet who approved the idea (of the rally). On the other hand, First Lady Cristina Kirchner, Alberto Fernandez, Anibal Fernandez and Jorge Taiana discreetly advised against a hostile attitude towards Washington.

"Nonetheless, the political rally took place without a minimal objection from the Argentine Government, and a predictable consequence was a further cooling of the US-Argentine bilateral relationship, which could discourage US investment and US support for Argentina's renegotiation of its Paris Club debt.

"On Saturday, after Burns' complaint occurred, Cristina Kirchner met with Chavez and De Vido in Caracas. However, on the Margarita Island, the President will end marking the direction of the country's foreign policy, which is becoming increasingly noticeable."

To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our classified website at:
<http://www.state.sqgov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>

WAYNE